

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): An apparatus for depositing particulate matter into a supply of fibrous material moving in a machine direction comprising:

 a forming jet assembly to provide a supply of fibrous material comprising an opened tow of continuous crimped fibers;

 a feed tray having an outlet positioned above the supply of fibrous material;
 two or more side plates, each side plate being disposed on a side of the feed tray and approximately parallel with the machine direction to inhibit the passage of air in a direction perpendicular to the machine direction;

 a motor coupled to the feed tray for vibrating the feed tray;

 wherein when the motor vibrates the feed tray particulate matter in the feed tray is deposited onto the supply of fibrous material; and

 wherein when the motor does not vibrate the feed tray substantially no particulate matter in the feed tray is deposited onto the supply of fibrous material.

Claim 2 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the particulate matter comprises superabsorbent particles.

Claim 3 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the particulate matter comprises an opened tow of cellulose acetate.

Claim 4 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is adapted to deposit particulate matter into the supply of fibrous material to form a composite having about 30% by weight of particulate matter and about 70% by weight of fibrous material to about 95% by weight of particulate matter and about 5% by weight of fibrous material.

Claim 5 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is adapted to deposit

particulate matter into the supply of fibrous material to form a composite having about 60% by weight of particulate matter and about 40% by weight of fibrous material to about 90% by weight of particulate matter and about 10% by weight of fibrous material.

Claim 6 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is adapted to deposit particulate matter into the supply of fibrous material to form a composite having about 75% by weight of particulate matter and about 25% by weight of fibrous material to about 85% by weight of particulate matter and about 15% by weight of fibrous material.

Claim 7 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the particulate matter is deposited at a flow rate of about 10,000 g/min to about 20,000 g/min.

Claim 8 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the particulate matter is deposited at a flow rate of about 12,500 g/min to about 17,500 g/min.

Claim 9 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the particulate matter is deposited at a flow rate of about 15,000 g/min.

Claim 10 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the motor is a pneumatic vibrator, an electromagnetic vibrator, a magnetic vibrator, an electric vibrator, or a hydraulic vibrator.

Claim 11 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the motor vibrates at any frequency up to about 600 Hz.

Claim 12 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the motor vibrates at any frequency up to about 520 Hz.

Claim 13 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the motor vibrates at any frequency up to about 430 Hz.

Claim 14 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the motor vibrates at a pitch of about 0.01 inches to about 0.125 inches.

Claim 15 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the motor vibrates at a pitch of about 0.02 inches to about 0.10 inches.

Claim 16 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the motor vibrates at a pitch of about 0.04 inches to about 0.08 inches.

Claim 17 (original): The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a control system that increases or decreases the amount of particulate matter deposited into the fibrous material by increasing or decreasing, respectively, the motor frequency and/or the motor pitch.

Claim 18 (canceled)

Claim 19 (currently amended): The apparatus of ~~claim 18~~ claim 26, wherein the upstream portion of the pan is covered.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The apparatus of ~~claim 18~~ claim 26, wherein the gate is adjustable to increase or decrease the distance by which the gate is spaced apart from the pan.

Claim 21 (currently amended): The apparatus of ~~claim 18~~ claim 26, wherein the gate is spaced apart from the pan by about 0.10 inches to about 1.00 inches.

Claim 22 (currently amended): The apparatus of ~~claim 18~~ claim 26, wherein the gate is spaced apart from the pan by about 0.125 inches to about 0.75 inches.

Claim 23 (currently amended): The apparatus of ~~claim 18~~ claim 26, wherein the gate is

spaced apart from the pan by about 0.25 inches to about 0.50 inches.

Claim 24 (currently amended): The apparatus of ~~claim 18~~ claim 26, further comprising one or more guides for controlling the flow path of the particulate matter.

Claim 25 (currently amended): The apparatus of ~~claim 18~~ claim 26, wherein the pan is contoured to control the flow path of the particulate matter.

Claim 26 (previously presented): An apparatus for depositing particulate matter into a supply of fibrous material moving in a machine direction comprising:

an apparatus adapted to provide a supply of fibrous material comprising an opened tow of continuous crimped fibers;

a feed tray comprising a pan having an outlet positioned above the supply of fibrous material and a gate disposed above and spaced apart from the pan, located proximal to the outlet and dividing the pan into upstream and downstream portions;

two or more side plates, each side plate being disposed on a side of the feed tray and approximately parallel with the machine direction to inhibit the passage of air in a direction perpendicular to the machine direction;

a motor coupled to the feed tray for vibrating the feed tray;

wherein when the motor vibrates the feed tray particulate matter in the feed tray flows beneath the gate and is deposited onto the supply of fibrous material; and

wherein when the motor does not vibrate the feed tray particulate matter in the feed tray is substantially contained in the upstream portion of the pan and substantially no particulate matter is deposited onto the supply of fibrous material.

Claim 27 (currently amended): The apparatus of ~~claim 18~~ claim 26, further comprising a vacuum draw roll for conveying the supply of fibrous material positioned below the outlet.

Claim 28 (original): The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the outlet is located about 0.25

inches to about 4.00 inches from the vacuum draw roll.

Claim 29 (original): The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the outlet is located about 0.375 inches to about 1.00 inch from the vacuum draw roll.

Claim 30 (original): The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the outlet is located about 0.50 inches from the vacuum draw roll.

Claim 31 (currently amended): The apparatus of ~~claim 18~~ claim 26, wherein the active width of the feed tray is about 2 inches to about 12 inches.

Claim 32 (currently amended): The apparatus of ~~claim 18~~ claim 26, wherein the active width of the feed tray is about 3 inches to about 10 inches.

Claim 33 (currently amended): The apparatus of ~~claim 18~~ claim 26, wherein the active width of the feed tray is about 3.75 inches to about 4.00 inches.

Claims 34-58 (canceled)